REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-15 appear in this application for the examiner's review and consideration. Claim 2 has been cancelled and has been incorporated into claim 1 to further define the invention. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-15 were rejected over US patent 6,652,984 to finestone et al. ("Finestone") for the reasons set forth on pages 2-3 of the action.

Finestone discloses a paper-plastic laminate sheeting capable of being converted by conventional equipment into envelopes, grocery bags and other dilatable container products that initially are in a flat state and are normally made of paper. The sheeting is composed of a paper facing sheet cold-laminated by means of a water-based adhesive to a reinforcing film of synthetic plastic material, such as polypropylene. The film is oriented to impart exceptional tear and burst strength characteristics to the resultant waterproof product. The product, whose exterior surface is formed by the paper facing sheet, is readily printable. For some applications, a second paper facing sheet is cold-laminated to the other side of the film to produce a three-ply laminate sheeting whose exposed surfaces are readily printable and can accept conventional adhesives.

While Finestone does disclose a paper/plastic/paper laminate, references to the paper layer are made in general terms and there is no criticality or importance to the requirements for the properties of the paper layers. A preferred paper is taught to be unbleached kraft paper, a sand colored opaque material typically used to make grocery bags. Such a material is neither translucent nor transparent as a single sheet let alone when present in a three sheet laminate of two outer sheets of this paper sandwiched around a plastic or polymer film. And even though Finestone contemplates other types of paper, such as white paper and coated paper, there is no explicit or inherent disclosure of the particular weights of these materials, nor is there any mention of the advantages of a translucent or transparent laminate. Conventional white paper has a weight of about 20 to 24 pounds per 3000 square feet. This material is too heavy to impart translucency to the laminate as claimed, particularly when two sheets of this paper are combined into a paper-plastic-paper laminate as disclosed by Finestone.

To further distinguish the presently claimed invention from this patent and the art in general, applicants have amended claim 1 to recite the preferred weights of paper sheet that provide the desired results of laminate translucency. The presently claimed values are much lower than those for conventional white paper. As noted in the specification in the second full paragraph on page 5, a single sheet of white paper having a weight of 24 pounds

has effectively no translucency, whereas two 12 pound sheets combined in the present laminate do achieve this property. This is an unexpected discovery in the present invention, as translucent laminates provide significant commercial advantages.

One commercial advantage includes the use of the laminate as a translucent envelope that is water and tear resistant. Addresses, logos, advertisements, or such other information may be printed on the envelope, and the translucency of the envelope may be varied to suit the desired purpose. The envelope may be made with a high level of translucency such that letters inside the envelope can be read through to encourage the receiver to open the envelope. Or, for sensitive contents, the envelope can either be made with a laminate with a higher paper weight or with appropriately placed printing or masking text or colors so that the contents of the envelope cannot be read through the laminate.

Similarly, the laminate can be used to make a packaging material, for which the ability to change the thickness and stiffness of the laminate, as well as its water and tear resistant quality, is particularly useful. In this application, the weight of the paper layers and/or the thickness of the film can be adjusted depending on the objects to be packaged.

The laminate may also be used as a dust jacket for a book, i.e., a sleeve that surrounds a book to prevent damage or deterioration of the book cover. When used as such, the present laminate allows printing thereon but still retains its translucency so that the cover remains visible through the jacket. The dust jacket may be printed with, for example, book title and author information, graphics, or personal notes. The printing can be made to coordinate with the designs or printing of the book cover while providing protection of the book at least until purchased. Thereafter, the consumer can remove the jacket or allow it to remain on the book.

Another use for the present laminate is as archivable paper. When printed and stored for long periods of time, the laminate retains its strength and resists yellowing over time because of the adherence of the paper to the film. The strength and durability of the laminate makes it a desirable material for preserving valuable prints.

The laminate may also be used as a restaurant menu. Because it is water and tear resistant and can be made as thin and pliant, or thick and stiff, as desired, the laminate provides an attractive material to be used everyday as a restaurant menu or advertisement..

These commercial embodiments are achieved due to the translucency of the laminate. These embodiments cannot be achieved in a paper-plastic-paper laminate that uses, e.g. two 20 or 24 pound sheets, as taught by the Finestone patent that was cited.

Another unexpected advantage of the present invention is that laminates can be formed from the presently claimed, relatively low paper weights. Prior knowledge in this field included a concern that the weight of the paper needed to be sufficiently high to facilitate handling and formation of the laminate. In contrast, it has been unexpectedly found that highly useful and improved translucent laminates can be prepared even though the weight of the paper layers can relatively low and that the amount of adhesive can be approximately the same as that used in forming laminates with heavier paper layers. The resulting laminates also have unexpected utilities, such as dust covers or envelopes where one can observe the material beneath the cover or in the envelope without being able to review or read such information. Also, the paper sheets can be printed or colored to provide additional desirable features while still retaining translucency.

Accordingly, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, early notification of such would be appreciated. Should the Examiner not agree, a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues in order to expedite the eventual allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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